

BEETHOVEN

Sonata in G Major, Op. 96
for Piano and Violin



DAVID ABEL, *Violin*
JULIE STEINBERG, *Piano*

ENESCU

Sonata No. 3, Op. 25
in Rumanian Folkstyle



BEETHOVEN

Sonata in G Major, Op. 96
for Piano and Violin

DAVID ABEL, Violin / JULIE STEINBERG, Piano

Side One

BEETHOVEN

Sonata in G Major, Op. 96, for Clavier and Violin

Allegro moderato (10:40)
Adagio espressivo (7:13)
Scherzo—allegro (2:00)
Poco allegretto (8:48)

Side Two

ENESCU

Sonata No. 3 in Romanian Folkstyle, Op. 25

Moderato malinconico (8:00)
Andante sostenuto e misterioso (7:46)
Allegro con brio, ma non troppo mosso (7:34)

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata in G Major, Op. 96, for Clavier and Violin*

This composition occupies a special place among Beethoven's creations because it shows a unique quality: there is an olympian elegance, a profound gentleness that pervades the entire work. Nowhere does Beethoven the earth shaker appear. Even the *scherzo* movement does not disturb this sustained thoughtfulness.

Violin and piano begin trading short thematic statements in quick exchange from the first notes of the first movement. Parallel arpeggios create a growing intensity. The middle section of the movement is characterized by abrupt modulations and an increased pace of exchanges. A striking procedure is the use of a seemingly interminable trill, nearly heart-stopping in its intensity.

The second movement, *Adagio espressivo*, one of Beethoven's floating *Adagios*, is based on the compulsion of a slow intense bass movement. The serenity of this movement is not disturbed by elaborate decoration from both instruments. And this stillness is further emphasized by a fourteen measure repeating pedal point (nearly one-fifth of the movement) which closes it.

The *Scherzo* sustains the serious character of the entire work. The last movement begins not only with a quick alternation of themes between the violin and piano, but a soft and loud alternation, as well, which adds to the feeling of growing intensity. An interrupted rondo is the plan, but the interruptions are of a major kind: another sensuous *adagio* and a daring fugato lead to a *presto* outburst concluding the movement.

The partnership of the two instruments is an equal one. Beethoven lists the instruments, "for Clavier and Violin," in the reverse of the expected order as he did in earlier works in this medium.

Produced in 1812, the same year as the Seventh and Eighth Symphonies, it was dedicated to Beethoven's illustrious pupil, the Archduke Rudolf of Austria. Drafts of the first movement have not survived to us, but other movements can be found in one of the sketchbooks dating most likely from February of 1812. The middle movements date from November of the same year after completion of the Eighth Symphony; the last movement was written and copied in early December, leaving less than three weeks for Pierre Rode, the famous violinist for whom it was written to prepare the first performance on the twenty-ninth of that month. This performance was played at the house of Duke Lobkowitz by the Archduke Rudolf and Rode and was repeated January 7, 1813, the day after Rode's first Viennese public concert.

Thayer translates the following note from Beethoven to the Archduke shortly before the first performance:

Tomorrow very early in the morning the copyist will be able to begin on the last movement. As I meanwhile am writing several other works, I did not make great haste in the last movement for the sake of mere punctuality, the more because I had, in writing it, to consider the playing of Rode. In our *finales* we like rushing and resounding passages, but this does not please R -- this hindered me somewhat -- for the rest all is likely to go well on Tuesday....

Beethoven, always a serious student of the violin from his youth, recognized his need for study, asking his friend the famous violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh for regular lessons which began when he was already twenty-four years old. His interest in playing the violin continued until deafness intervened and he was unable to hear the sounds he made.

This tenth sonata was a lone product, Beethoven's final statement in this form, written ten years after all the others had been created.

Its grandeur can be summed up in two statements which may be



applied specially to this work: "Even the best instrumentalists are just barely good enough." (Carl Flesch) and, this is "music that is better than it can be performed" (Artur Schnabel).

It should be added that for the sensitive listener this sonata performance will repeat itself in the mind, appearing unbidden, long after the recording is heard. To characterize this music further would be intrusive. It speaks in special and secret ways to each listener.

ENESCU: *Sonata No. 3 in Romanian Folkstyle, Op. 25*

A series of Enescu postage stamps, dozens of Enescu Conservatories, an Enescu Museum in Bucharest, annual international Enescu music festivals, show the overwhelming esteem in which the greatest Rumanian composer is held in his native land. His birthplace was even renamed in his honor.

The Rumanian nation, formed in the nineteenth century and enlarged in the political settlement after World War I, showed a remarkably rich diversity of folk styles almost entirely untouched by European music. Turkish domination of the country had ended only in 1822. After that time Austrian rulers governed loosely. Ethnic and trade connections to the eastern Mediterranean countries were strongly maintained, while rugged terrain limited contacts with western Europe.

The celebration of ethnic styles by such composers as Janáček for Czechoslovakia, Bartók for Hungary, and Enescu for Rumania placed a strong mark on eastern European music of the 1920's.

Enescu absorbed the folk styles of his country in all of their complexity. He found slides, microtones, augmented seconds, insistent repeated notes played on the cimbalom, drone effects, free rhythms, four and five note gapped scales, tone patterns that repeat over and over (ostinatos). Important notes in melodies were approached by a fast swarming over neighboring notes.

All of these devices Enescu appropriated along with the very special folk harmonies based on chords built of as many as five consecutive thirds and of rhythms derived partly from the complexities of spoken Rumanian (termed *parlando-rubato* in a study of this style made by Bela Bartók), and partly from the special technical features that were used by native Rumanian instruments. Heavy accents which occur frequently in this composition were taken from the strong footfalls of folk dance.

In much of his music Enescu draws extensively on these resources of folk technique. It forms the major focus of his most celebrated works, the Rumanian Rhapsodies, the Rumanian Poem and the present Sonata.

Some technical features, such as the ethereal harmonics of the violin and the thick clusters at the end of the work were Enescu's own personal creations.

The masterful control of form and procedure are advanced far beyond the small shapes of folk music, commanding admiration for Enescu's grand concept.

ENESCU

Sonata No. 3, Op. 25
in Rumanian Folkstyle

Georges Enescu, who had been a child prodigy as a violinist, played the first performance of the Sonata No. 3 in Rumanian Folkstyle, Op. 25, in the Rumanian city of Oradea on January 16, 1927 with the pianist Nicolae Caravia. Not a place where premieres were common, it was chosen by Enescu to honor the poet and patriotic writer Josef Vulcan posthumously in his home city. Enescu had held Vulcan in high esteem from his youth and had dedicated the music of a hymn "Intoarceți venchea cartea vremitor trecute" to him in 1904.

The first performance created a sensation. The *Oredea Tribuna* for January 25, 1927 reports that the youth of the city brought out and harnessed coach horses and drove the composer round and round the theater building to sustained ovations from the crowd, then took him in triumph to the Park Hotel.

Thirteen days later the performance was repeated in Bucharest. In the next two seasons Enescu performed the work on tour across Europe with three pianists: Caravia, Alexander Alessandrescu and Alfred Cortot.

Recognizing Enescu's genius in the use of folkloric materials, the greatest Rumanian ethno-musicologist Constantin Brailoiu exclaimed on hearing this Sonata, "*Hic incipit vita nova!*" (Here begins new life!)

Pianist Julie Steinberg performs extensively as a soloist and chamber player. She has appeared with the San Francisco Symphony and has been a featured soloist in its Mostly Mozart Festival and its New and Unusual Music Series. In addition, she has been soloist with the Oakland Symphony Sound Spectrum and with the Berkeley Symphony. She is a participant in the Chamber Music West Festival in San Francisco and also performs regularly as an assisting artist. In this capacity she has appeared in Master Classes both in the U.S. and in Europe with cellist, Mstislav Rostropovich and with flutist, Jean-Pierre Rampal. Julie Steinberg holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Stanford University and is currently on the faculty of Mills College in Oakland, California.

David Abel's musical activities span a wide range including chamber music, solo recitals, orchestra appearances, and teaching violin and chamber music.

Born in Wenatchee Washington in 1935, he began his violin study at the age of three, and continued his work on the West Coast and in San Francisco, where he studied with Naoum Blinder, former concertmaster of the San Francisco Symphony. He was a student of the Alma Trio in chamber-music at the San Francisco Conservatory.

He made his orchestral debut at the age of fourteen with the San Francisco Symphony and has appeared with major orchestras throughout the United States. At eighteen Mr. Abel played his first New York recital, and following that debut concertized in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Latin America. He was a winner of the Leventritt International Violin Competition in 1964, and toured Europe under the auspices of the Martha Baird Rockefeller Foundation.

David Abel has taught at San Jose State University, San Francisco State University, Grinnell College, and Stanford University. He is violinist with the Francesco Chamber Trio, which won the 1974 Naumberg Chamber Music award in New York. He is a participant in the Chamber Music West Festival in San Francisco, a member of the Crown Chamber Players at U.C. Santa Cruz, and has appeared at the Carmel Bach Festival and the Mozart Festival San Luis Obispo.

He is currently Artist in Residence with the Francesco Trio at the San Francisco Conservatory.

Technical / Listening Notes

Chamber music is meant to be performed and enjoyed in a relatively small room, as opposed to an expansive concert hall. Therefore the perspective of this recording is close...as though the artists are creating the music in your listening room.

The musical instruments used in this recording are of superb quality, complementing the talents of the artists, and enhancing the color and expressiveness of the literature. The piano is a 9 foot Hamburg Steinway model D concert grand, selected for its almost magical harmonic warmth and evenness of tone. The Hamburg Steinway is Ms. Steinberg's chosen instrument. The violin is a Guarnerius, built in Cremona, Italy in 1719. The Guarnerius sings with speed, focus, and sweetness.

A spaced-pair of Schoeps microphones, driving a vacuum tube line-level amplifier, are used to capture a naturally open, and dynamically accurate sonic presentation.

The sonic image of the violin should originate just to the right of the inside edge of the left speaker. The overall tonal balance of this recording reflects the recording site (Mills College Concert Hall), the instruments and the recording approach, being slightly warm and never strident.

Recorded by David A. Wilson • Assistance by Sheryl Lee Wilson, David A. Wilson III, Page Turner, Farrell Hollingsworth • Hamburg Steinway provided by Pro Piano
Recorded at Mills College Concert Hall • Cover photographs by John Pearson • Mastered by Bruce Leek • Matrix by Rick Goldman

©© Wilson Audio Specialties,
Novato, California 94947 (415) 897-8440



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PRODUCED BY: Wilson Audiophile Recordings, LLC

ORIGINAL RECORDING ENGINEER: David A. Wilson

PROJECT MANAGER: Daryl C. Wilson

ANALOG TO HIGH DEFINITION DIGITAL TRANSFER:
Bruce Brown, Puget Sound Studios

TRANSFER EDITING: Bruce Brown, Puget Sound Studios

SONIC EVALUATION: David A. Wilson, Sheryl Lee Wilson, Daryl C. Wilson

DIRECTOR OF MORAL SUPPORT: Sasha Wilson

TECHNICAL NOTES:

Description of equipment and processes used for Master Tape transfers at
Puget Sound Studios:

PUGET SOUND STUDIOS RECEIVED THE TAPES FROM WILSON AUDIOPHILE RECORDINGS, LLC, IN A WOODEN CRATE. MASTER TAPES WERE THEN CATALOGUED IN AN EXCEL SPREADSHEET. EACH MASTER TAPE WAS THEN INSPECTED, CLEANED WITH AN ANTI-FUNGAL SOLUTION, AND THEN A LUBRICANT WAS APPLIED TO PREPARE THE MASTER TAPES FOR THE TRANSFER PROCESS. APPROXIMATELY 8 OF THE FIRST 13 REELS HAD TO BE BAKED TO REFORMULATE THE BINDING. THIS WAS DONE IN AN INCUBATOR AT 135 DEGREES FOR 24 HOURS AND THEN THEY WERE LEFT TO COOL BACK DOWN TO ROOM TEMPERATURE FOR THE NEXT 24 HOURS. ALL SPLICES WERE INSPECTED AND REPAIRED, IF NECESSARY.

EACH TRANSFER WAS EXECUTED ON A STUDER A-80 RC MK II, WHICH HAD EITHER A FLUX MAGNETICS EXTENDED RESPONSE REPRO HEAD OR A WOLKE DIN BUTTERFLY REPRO HEAD. CUSTOM MODIFICATIONS TO THE MACHINES HAVE BEEN PERFORMED BY JOHN FRENCH AND/OR KI CHOI.

EACH MASTER TAPE WAS STORED BY WILSON AUDIOPHILE "TAILS-OUT" IN WHICH PUGET SOUND STUDIOS DID A LIBRARY WIND TO THE TAKE-UP REEL. ALL LEVELS WERE SET ACCORDING TO INCLUDED EQ SHEETS AND EACH 1KHZ TONE WAS FURTHER SET AT PRECISELY 1KHZ, VIA A CUSTOM VARI-SPEED ADJUSTMENT. THIS PROVIDED THE EXACT SPEED THE MASTER TAPES WERE RECORDED AT. ALL CABLING USED IN THIS PROCESS WAS JPS LABS ALUMINATA AND ELECTRICAL POWER WAS PROVIDED BY AN EQUI=TECH BALANCED WALL CABINET USING OYAIDE RECEPTACLES.

A TOTAL OF FIVE DIFFERENT ANALOG-TO-DIGITAL CONVERTERS WERE USED TO PROVIDE SAMPLES FOR THE WILSONS TO EVALUATE. ULTIMATELY AN EMM LABS ADC-8 MK IV, CUSTOM MODIFIED BY ANDREAS KOCH, WAS CHOSEN BY DAVE AND DARYL WILSON FOR THE TRANSFERS INTO A SONOMA DSD WORKSTATION FOR CAPTURE AND EDITING. ALL SIGNALS WERE ROUTED THROUGH A RUPERT NEVE ANALOG MASTERING CONSOLE IF ANY GAIN, PANNING, OR EQ CHANGES NEEDED TO BE MADE.

ALL DSD FILES WERE TRANSFERRED INTO A MERGING TECHNOLOGIES PYRAMIX DSD/DXD MASSCORE WORKSTATION FOR SAMPLE RATE CONVERSION, FORMAT CONVERSION, AND META-DATA TAGGING. THE PYRAMIX APODIZING FILTER WAS USED FOR CONVERSION TO PCM. FILES WERE THEN UPLOADED TO A SECURE SERVER FOR THE WILSONS TO DOWNLOAD AND QA.

Description of the Equipment used in the Provo, Utah "Wilson Music Room" that Wilson Audiophile Recordings, LLC put to use for Sonic Evaluation:

SPEAKERS: WILSON AUDIO ALEXANDRIA XLF, THOR'S HAMMER
ELECTRONICS: APPLE MAC MINI, AMARRA & AUDIRVANA PLUS, WEISS INT 202, AUDIO RESEARCH DAC8, AUDIO RESEARCH 40TH ANNIVERSARY PRE-AMP, VTL SIEGFRIED AND/OR D'AGOSTINO MOMENTUM AMPLIFIERS
CABLES: AUDIOQUEST FIREWIRE, TRANSPARENT OPUS

© Wilson Audiophile Recordings, LLC
2233 Mountain Vista Lane
Provo, UTAH 84606
801.377.2233